CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: November 6, 2007 **ITEM NUMBER:** Item Number

SUBJECT: In-Car Video Recording Systems for Police Patrol Vehicles

DATE: October 18, 2007

FROM: Police Department

PRESENTATION BY: Lieutenant Tim Schennum – Logistical Support Bureau

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Tim Schennum – (714) 754-5266

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve and authorize the Mayor to sign the Purchase Agreement for the acquisition of 49 in-car digital video recording systems for the Police Department, with L3 Communications, Mobile-Vision, Inc., 90 Fanny Road, Boonton, NJ 07005. The total amount of the purchase is $440,356.04.

BACKGROUND:

For decades video evidence has been considered an excellent source of providing an unbiased witness to a particular event, especially video evidence from police in-car video recording systems. In addition, police in-car video has helped law enforcement agencies throughout the country and abroad to establish a clear understanding of what occurred during a police event, which is vital to a department's veracity and its public perception.

The City of Costa Mesa recognized this fact. In 1998, the City's Citizen Advisory Committee recommended the purchase and installation of "vehicle video monitoring systems," (in-car video) utilizing three (3) separate grants. As a result, the City approved, purchased and installed several in-car video recording systems in the police car fleet.

By July of 2003, the technology, which utilized VHS tapes as a means of video storage, had become obsolete and the systems themselves were functioning intermittently. These now archaic systems were decommissioned and removed from all police cars. It was at that time the Chief of Police recommended exploring alternative methods of in-car video recording equipment, specifically digital technology. Due to other impending technology initiatives, which were CAD, RMS and MDC replacement, alternative methods of in-car video recording equipment were not explored until 2006.

In the FY 06-07 Budget, the City Council approved funds in the amount of $462,248.000 for the purchase of new Police Department in-car video recording systems. This decision was made to provide several operation-critical benefits such as, enhancing officer safety, accountability and integrity; provide an added layer of

protection to the community; promote a positive image of the department; serve as a training tool; reduce the likelihood of a confrontation by those who are aware they are being recorded; and decrease the likelihood of costly litigation.

Some additional operation-critical benefits of an in-car video system are:

- Memorialize police car transports of citizens;
- Resolve probable cause related questions;
- Improve conviction rates;
- Reduce time in court proceedings and litigation; and
- Provide overall clarity to any recorded event

ANALYSIS:

In March of 2006, a team of police personnel, with an interest in law enforcement technological advances, consisting of lieutenants, sergeants, a corporal and frontline officers, were organized into the In-Car Video System Selection Committee. They were tasked with the important responsibility of researching various in-car video systems and making a meaningful recommendation concerning the system best suited to meet the needs of the Costa Mesa Police Department.

After the selection committee was formed, finding a method to move forward with the research was established. The committee determined the most appropriate and reliable process to appraise systems for future testing and evaluation was through site visits of other agencies that utilize the equipment, attend law enforcement tradeshows that feature companies that make the in-car video recording products and invite vendors to present their products to the committee members for review and evaluation.

One critically important feature the committee members wanted to ensure each company offered was wireless uploading of video files. The feature was important to avoid the burdensome loading and unloading of storage media such as CDs, DVDs, flash-drives, etc.

After the agency site visits, tradeshow appearances and vendor presentations were completed, the committee members met and reviewed all the relevant information collected. The committee selected five in-car video systems for the field testing and evaluation purposes. Those systems were:

1. Coban – TopCamm –II
2. Kustom Signal – Digital Eyewitness
3. L3 Communication – Mobile-Vision
4. Motorola – Digitalpatroller
5. Panasonic– Arbitrator

The five companies were contacted and preparations were made to install the systems in five different police cars. All five systems were installed and put into service for testing and evaluation by the end-users; officers working in the field.

In addition to the in-car component, each company installed what was termed a "backend." This was the video storage portion of the system, which was accessed through a PC or laptop. The backend computers were stored in the Police Department

report writing area. This backend allowed those testing and evaluating the systems to view uploaded video and make DVD copies, if necessary.

In order to conduct a proper testing and evaluation process, an MVS (mobile video system) Survey form was created for the end-user-evaluators (refer to Attachment 1). The MVS Survey form evaluated six different categories:

1. In Vehicle – Clarity of Picture
2. In Vehicle – Ease of Use
3. Overall In Vehicle Design/Layout
4. In Station – Video Searching Capabilities
5. In Station – MVS System Operations
6. Overall Rating of the MVS

The end-user-evaluators rated each category "Poor," "Fine," "Good," or "Outstanding." The Poor rating was given a numerical score of 0; Fine a numerical score of 1; Good a numerical score of 2; and Outstanding a numerical score of 3.

All the scores were assembled into a spreadsheet (copy listed below). The end-user-evaluators did not know the method of the scoring for each category, nor the spreadsheet data results. This was done in an effort to preserve an influence-free testing environment. The following scores were calculated:

	Coban	Kustom	L3 Comm	Motorola	Panasonic
In Vehicle - Clarity of Picture	1.67	2.14	3.00	1.43	1.63
In Vehicle - Ease of Use	1.00	2.43	3.00	0.71	1.25
Overall In Vehicle Design / Layout	0.67	2.00*	2.00*	1.29	1.50
In Station Video Searching Capabilities	1.00	1.57	2.00	1.00	1.80
In Station MVS System Operations	1.00	1.20	2.50	1.25	1.33
Overall Rating of the MVS	0.67	2.14	3.00	0.71	1.25

L3 significantly outscored all other systems. There was only one like score, under the category of Overall in Vehicle Design/Layout. This score indicated both L3 and Kustom Signal received a Good (2.00*) rating. This topic was specifically address by the Technical Staff from the Telecommunications Division, who provided the following feedback:

"L-3 – This system appears to be the best in regard to ease of installation and repair/maintenance. Equipment is compact and rugged with a very small footprint inside the cockpit." "Kustom Signal – This system appears to be very low-budget and would not be expected to endure the everyday use in the field."

Additionally, the testing and evaluation period was set to start on June 1, 2007, and scheduled to run for approximately 8-weeks, however several of the vendors were unable to install their test systems prior to the official launch date. During the pre-evaluation process and during the formal evaluation period, four out of the five vendors (Motorola, Panasonic, Kustom Signal and Coban) all experienced wireless uploading failures on more than one occasion; some more significant than others. All of these uploading failures required service calls from the vendors' service representatives. L3 was the only system whose wireless upload capabilities did not fail.

In addition, an unforeseen power outage was experienced during the evaluation process, due to a Southern California Edison switch-change. After the power was restored, L3 was the only system that restarted, went back online and begin uploading video without intervention from a service representative. The other vendors needed to provide service calls to get their systems back online and to reinitiate the video uploading process.

The In-Car Video System Selection Committee members collectively agreed, due to the previously mentioned inferior performance of the other vendors and based on the data gathered over this entire process that the L3 Mobile-Vision In-Car Video System was to be the video system of choice and as such they recommend it for purchase by the City for the Police Department.

The following are the two highest rated vendors' proposed cost for the purchase of 49 in-car systems and their associated equipment.

Vendor	Proposed Cost
1. L3 Communications, Mobile-Vision, Inc., 90 Fanny Road, Boonton, NJ 07005	$440,356.04
2. Kustom Signal, Inc., 9325 Pflumm, Lenexa, KS 66215	$521,312.24

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Two alternatives were considered. The first alternative was to select the system which ranked second in the evaluation process; the Kustom Signal – Digital Eyewitness in-car video system. The overwhelming obstacles with this option are Kustom Signal's inferior performance during the evaluation process, its durability concerns expressed by the City's technical staff and its significantly higher cost. Although not insurmountable, these obstacles are not present with the choice of the L3 Mobile-Vision In-Car Video System and therefore make this alternative undesirable.

The second alternative is to continue assessing other in-car video systems for consideration. However, the In-Car Video System Selection Committee is certain the search for in-car video systems and the subsequent testing and evaluation process was thorough and did in fact eliminate several systems from the process that did not meet the needs of the Police Department.

FISCAL REVIEW:

Funding for the acquisition of the in-car digital video recording systems for the Police Department, in the amount of $462,248, is included in the adopted FY 07-08 budget and available for appropriation for the purposes specified herein.

LEGAL REVIEW:

Legal has reviewed the documents and approved them as to form.

CONCLUSION:

After a comprehensive search, along with a thorough testing and evaluation period, the In-Car Video System Selection Committee, who used end-user surveys, input from the

Telecommunication Division and the overall performance of the tested systems as their selection criteria, selected the L3 Mobile-Vision In-Car Video System as the in-car video system of choice.

The L3 Mobile-Vision, Inc. In-Car Video System will provide field officers with an excellent law enforcement tool that functions as an unbiased witness and will help to address liability concerns associated with modern law enforcement activities.

It is recommended the City Council approve the purchase of forty-nine in-car video recording systems from L3 Mobile-Vision, Inc.

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Chief of Police

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Director of Finance

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DISTRIBUTION:

ATTACHMENTS:
1 MVS Survey form
2 In-Car Video System Side-By-Side Price Comparison
3 L3 Communications Mobile-Vision, Inc. Purchase Agreement

File Name Date Time